



2021

PA YOUTH SURVEY (PAYS) State Report Snapshot





TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW:

Participation 3

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Highest 2021 Risk Factors 4
Prioritized Risk and Protective Factors By Grade 5
Protective Factors 5

SUBSTANCE USE:

Alcohol Data 6
Marijuana Data 7
Tobacco Data 7
Vaping and E-cigarettes Data 8
Prescription Drugs 9
Other Drugs 9
Perceptions of Risk and Approval 10

SCHOOL SAFETY AND CLIMATE:

School Statistics 11

MENTAL HEALTH:

Mental Health Facts 12

OTHER DATA:

Other Data 13



PARTICIPATION

PA Youth Survey (PAYS)

PAYS is a primary tool in Pennsylvania’s prevention approach of using data to drive decision making. By looking not just at rates of problem behaviors but also at the root causes of those behaviors, PAYS allows schools and communities to address reasons (such as a lack of commitment to school) rather than only looking at the symptoms after the fact (like poor grades). This approach has been repeatedly shown in national research studies to be the most effective in helping youth develop into healthy, productive members of their society.

This report showcases data retrieved from the 2021 PA Youth Survey (PAYS) and will focus on data related to that administration. Key data points included in this report are those related to the causes of the problem behaviors also known as **risk factors**, and **protective factors**. PAYS was administered in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 in the state of Pennsylvania.

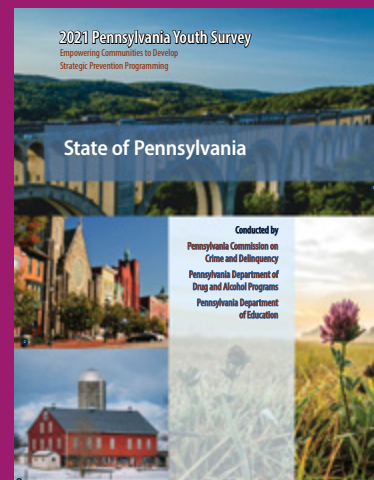
In 2021 there were 246,081 valid participants with a participation rate of 69.5%. 396 School Districts (out of 500, a 79.2% participation rate) and 46 other schools took part in the 2021 PAYS Administration, representing 1,072 individual school buildings.

- 246,081 total student participation across 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades.
- Participation Rate of 69.5% of students eligible to take the survey.
- 2021 was the first year students could indicate “Other” as their Gender. Nearly 8,000 students or 3.2% indicated this option.



and took part in the 2021 PAYS Administration, representing 1,072 individual school buildings

To access the full 2021 State PAYS Report, visit: <https://bit.ly/3ROdbjw>



OR SCAN THIS QR CODE



HIGHEST 2021 RISK FACTORS

All Grades (% of youth at risk)

Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior: 51.5% ↑

2019: 48.2%
2017: 46.2%

Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use: 49.7% ↑

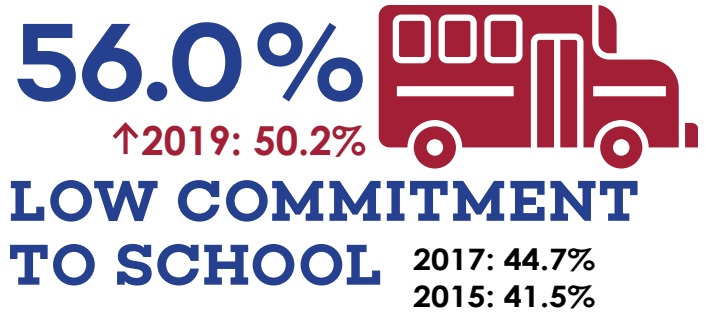
2019: 49.2%
2017: 49.1%

Low Neighborhood Attachment: 44.2% ↑

2019: 43.5%
2017: 42.5%

Percent of Students with Total Risk (41)

(defined as 5 or more risk factors for 6th and 8th graders and 7 or more risk factors for 10th and 12th graders)



Risk Factor	2017 PAYS	2019 PAYS	2021 PAYS	BH Norm
Low Commitment to School	44.7	50.6	56	50.3
Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior	46.2	48.2	51	33.3
Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use	49.1	49.2	50	51.4
Low Neighborhood Attachment	46.5	43.5	44	42.5
Depressive Symptoms	37.7	38.5	41	38.7
Total Risk (Defined as 5 or more risk factors for 6th and 8th graders and 7 or more risk factors for 10th and 12th graders)	40	41	41	n/a

*Percentages represent the percent of youth at risk of engaging in problem behaviors due to a given risk factor.




PRIORITIZED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS BY GRADE

	Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior	Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use	Low Commitment to School
6TH GRADE	57.9% 2019: 53.3% 2017: 50.1%	51.6% 2019: 48.8% 2017: 47.2%	47.0% 2019: 45.4% 2017: 37.2%
8TH GRADE	47.2% 2019: 41.7% 2017: %	44.8% 2019: 43.2% 2017: %	58.3% 2019: 52.7% 2017: 46.8%
10TH GRADE	50.4% 2019: 47.2% 2017: %	45.7% 2019: 46.7% 2017: %	61.7% 2019: 55.3% 2017: 49.8%
12TH GRADE	49.4% 2019: 47.7% 2017: %	57.1% 2019: 58.2% 2017: %	57.9% 2019: 53.3% 2017: 50.1%

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Highest levels of protection for 2021 remain in the Family Domain:



59.9%
Family Attachment



59.9%
Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement



56.3%
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

All these values did go down from 2019, though. ↓

Total Protection is 54.4%, higher than the BH Norm at 49.2% ↑



ALCOHOL DATA

For the fifth straight administration, lifetime use continued to decrease in all grades.

National Average

PA is higher than the National Average in lifetime use

8th: 26.9% to 21.7%

10th: 42.7% to 34.7%

12th: 33.9% to 27.4%

30-day Use

30-day use of alcohol is slightly higher in PA 10th and 12th graders than their national peers.

The rates did decline from the prior administration:

10th: 21.6% to 16.1% ↓

12th: 33.9% to 27.4% ↓

Binge Drinking ↓

Binge drinking rates decreased

10th: 8.4% to 5.3%

12th: 17.2% to 11.8%

10th and 12th Graders

Female Students:

More 10th and 12th grade female students reported lifetime use of alcohol than their male counterparts:

10th: 45.2% to 39.8%

12th: 58.4% to 51.8%

They also reported higher levels of binge drinking, 12.9% of female seniors to 10.8% of 12th grade males.

Driving Under the Influence: ↓

The rate of 12th graders who reported driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol during the past year continued to decline, from 8.7% in 2013 to 5.5% in 2017, to 3.9% in 2019, to 2.5% in 2021.

However, the rate of 12th graders who reported driving after using marijuana remains much higher at 5.9% (though this rate was down from 9.8% in 2019).

65.2%
NEVER USED
ALCOHOL
↑2019: 59%



Obtaining Alcohol

For youth who reported alcohol use in the past year, the two most commonly reported sources were “parents provided it to me” and “took it without permission (from home, store, etc.)”.

For 12th graders, the most commonly reported source was “friends, brothers, or sisters over 21 provided it to me”.

57.1% of seniors reported it would be easy or somewhat easy to obtain alcohol

(continuing the decline from 69.0% in 2015) ↓

Reported that they would not be caught by the police for underage drinking:

10th: 72.9%

12th: 80.3%

37.3% of seniors reported they would be willing to try alcohol before they were 21 ↓

2019: 46.9%

2017: 49.9%

2015: 53.1%



MARIJUANA

PA students are using marijuana at lower levels than their national peers:

Lifetime

Change from 2019 to 2021

8th Grade: 10.2% to 5.7%

10th Grade: 22.0% to 14.8%

12th Grade: 38.6% to 30.4%

All of these rates continue to drop.

30-Day

Change from 2019 to 2021

8th Grade: 4.2% to 2.7%

10th Grade: 10.1% to 8.0%

12th Grade: 19.5% to 16.8%

Marijuana vs Tobacco (Lifetime and 30-Day)

IN 2021 THERE WAS A DECREASE IN WILLINGNESS TO TRY MARIJUANA FOR ALL GRADES, WITH ONLY **24.7 % OF SENIORS** REPORTING WILLINGNESS TO TRY



87% of PA youth have never tried marijuana!



TOBACCO DATA

Lifetime use of cigarettes continues to decline

8TH GRADE

2021: 5.4% ↓

2019: 6.9%

2017: 9.4%

2015: 11.0%

10TH GRADE

2021: 9.6% ↓

2019: 12.2%

2017: 16.2%

2015: 18.3%

12TH GRADE

2021: 15.3% ↓

2019: 21.9%

2017: 29.0%

2015: 32.7%

30-Day use of cigarettes has decreased ↓

The percentage of 12th graders reporting 30-day use of cigarettes has decreased by nearly 70% since 2015.



VAPING & E-CIGARETTES

PA students are reporting 30-day e-cigarette use at the same rates as the national average:

30-Day

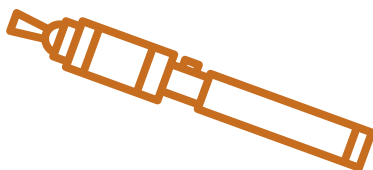
8th Grade: 9.2% to 8.9%

10th Grade: 16.2% to 15.6%

12th Grade: 33.1% to 30.9%



Rates in all grades went down from 2019.



38.3%

OF 12TH GRADERS WHO VAPED
IN THE PAST YEAR SAID THEY
VAPED MARIJUANA OR HASH OIL.

WHAT ARE YOUTH VAPING?

Nicotine is the most common substance youth report vaping

Among 12th graders who report vaping in the past year, the percent who report vaping marijuana has increased each year since 2015.

Among 6th graders who report vaping in the past year, the majority report not knowing what substance they vaped

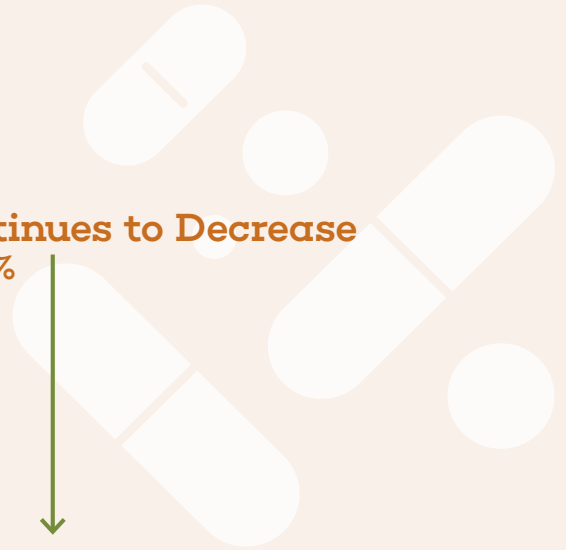


PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

12th Grade Lifetime Pain Reliever Misuse Continues to Decrease though this remains higher than the national average of 2.3%

2021: 3.3%
2019: 6.1%
2017: 8.8%
2015: 12.1%

12th Grade 30-Day Pain Reliever Misuse continues to Decrease from 1.1% to 0.5%



OVERALL PERCENTAGE

The overall percentage of students reporting it would be easy for them to obtain prescription drugs not prescribed continues to decrease:
27.8% in 2015
25.5% in 2017
23.9% in 2019
20.6% in 2021

MODERATE/GREAT RISK

The percentage of students reporting moderate or great risk of harming themselves by using prescription drugs not prescribed to them continues to increase to 83.7% in 2021.

WRONG TO USE

83.6% of 12th graders reported that their friends would think it was wrong or very wrong to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them.
81.5% in 2017
83.2% in 2019

LIFETIME USE

Lifetime use of prescription stimulants among 12th graders continues to decrease:
9.7% in 2015
6.8% in 2017
4.2% in 2019
2.9% in 2021

The national rate for 2021 was 4.9%.

OTHER DRUGS

Lifetime Use

Inhalants

Lower than the national average, especially in 8th grade (4.4% to 11.3%)

Synthetic Drugs


Lifetime use among 12th graders:

6.9% in 2013 4.8% in 2015 2.0% in 2017 1.4% in 2019 0.7% in 2021

Heroin lifetime use remains low for 12th graders: 0.4%

12th graders reported lifetime use of hallucinogens: 5.5%

LESS THAN 1%



30-DAY USE OF COCAINE, CRACK AND METHAMPHETAMINE REMAINS LOW



PERCEPTIONS OF RISK AND APPROVAL

The perceived risk of using marijuana regularly has increased:

Percentage of students who reported the view of moderate or great risk for regular use by grade

6th Grade: 79.0%

8th Grade: 81.1%

10th Grade: 69.5% (66.5% in 2019)

12th Grade: 56.2% (53.5% in 2019)



68.8%

OF 12TH GRADERS REPORTED MODERATE OR GREAT RISK TO BINGE DRINK

6TH GRADE

90.8% reported that their friends would disapprove of using marijuana

8TH GRADE

82.8% reported that their friends would disapprove of using marijuana

10TH GRADE

65.6% reported that their friends would disapprove of using marijuana. Compared to 70.8% for daily alcohol use.

12TH GRADE

48.5% reported that their friends would think it was wrong or very wrong to use marijuana. Compared to 63.9% for daily alcohol use.

All of these numbers are now increasing, reversing a trend toward peer acceptance.

89.2% OF STUDENTS REPORTED THAT THEIR PARENTS WOULD THINK IT WAS WRONG OR VERY WRONG FOR THEM TO USE MARIJUANA. THIS IS LOWER THAN THE RATES FOR TOBACCO (94.7%) AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (93.1%).

78.8% of students reported they would disapprove of someone their age drinking nearly every day, including 69.5% of seniors.

Overall, 90.2% of students reported it would be wrong for someone their age to smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day. This figure continues to climb in all grades.

In 2021, only 48.0% of seniors and 62.6% of 10th graders reported that they would somewhat or strongly disapprove of someone their age using marijuana. For 6th graders, this figure was 91.6% and for 8th graders it was 83.8%.





SCHOOL STATISTICS

	<p>For the fifth straight administration, the rate of students who said that they felt school would be important later in life dropped in all grades.</p> <p>6th Graders: 2021: 64.8%, 2019: 72.2%, 2017: 80.3%</p> <p>12th Graders: 2021: 32.1%, 2019: 39.8%, 2017: 46.3%</p>
	<p>Overall, 32.4% of students felt that their schoolwork was meaningful and important, down from 43.9% in 2015, 40.4% in 2017, and 35.9%.</p> <p>8th Graders: 33.5%, 10th Graders: 20.4%, 12th Graders: 19.7%</p>
	<p>Overall, 82.0% of students reported that they felt safe in their school. This is down from 86.5% in 2013, 84.1% in 2015, and 83.4% in 2017, but up from 2019's rate of 80.0%.</p>
	<p>78.5% of students that there is an opportunity for students to talk one-on-one with a teacher, up from 76.2% in 2019.</p>
	<p>16.7% of students reported being threatened at school over the last year, down from 20.5% in 2017 and 18.9% in 2019. 6th Graders: 19.8%, 8th Graders: 21.1%</p>
	<p>10.3% of 6th graders say they were attacked at school during the last year.</p>
	<p>Only 55.1% of students reported that adults stop bullying when they see it or are told about it, down from 54.8% in 2019 and 63.0% in 2017. This ranges from 73.1% of 6th graders, to 59.7% of 8th graders, to 47.2% of 10th graders, down to only 42.1% of 12th graders.</p>
	<p>25.0% of 10th graders and 24.9% of 12th graders reported inappropriate sexual contact when using technology. This is a decrease from 2017 in both grades (31.5% and 28.1% respectively) and 2019 (28.6% and 26.3%).</p>
	<p>23.2% of students reported having suffered some bullying over the last year, down from 28.2% in 2017 and 27.1% in 2019. This was highest among 6th graders at 29.0%.</p>
	<p>14.6% of students reported being bullied through texting or social media over the past year, up from 14.0% in 2019. 6th Graders: 17.4%, 8th Graders: 17.2%</p>
	<p>68.1% of students, including 70.4% of 10th graders and 69.6% of 12th graders, reported being emotionally abused through insults or name-calling.</p>
	<p>17.1% of 10th graders and 20.5% of 12th graders reported being abused by being isolated from friends or family by another person.</p>
	<p>The most common reasons students reported being bullied for include "The Way I Look (clothing, hairstyle, etc.)" at 48.0% with the highest rate among 8th graders at 52.0%; and "My Size (height/weight)" at 40.2% with the highest rate among 8th graders at 43.3%.</p>
	<p>The percentage of students who were bullied that reported the reason was their sexual orientation jump from 10.2% to 17.6%, with the largest jump among 10th graders who went from 13.0% to 22.3%.</p>



MENTAL HEALTH FACTS

	Feeling Sad or Depressed	Self Harm	Food Insecurity
ALL GRADES	<p>40.1% of students reported feeling sad or depressed most days 2019: 43.1% 2017: 40.8%</p> <p>27.9% ↑ up from 25.0% of students stated “Sometimes they think life is not worth it” 10th: 30.9% 12th: 30.7%</p>	<p>41.5% of students who reported being bullied through texting/social media reported seriously considering suicide in the past year</p> <p>Student reported self-harm (such as cutting) increased in all grades</p>	<p>9.1% of students worried that food would run out before their family could buy more</p>
8TH GRADE	<p>38.2% Reported a reversal in this measure 2019: 33.9% 2017: 36.9%</p>	<p>20.1% Student reported self-harm (such as cutting) increased</p> <p>18.8% reported considering suicide and 11.2% attempting suicide</p>	<p>53.1% of students who considered suicide reported skipping school due to bullying fears</p>
10TH GRADE	<p>43.8% of students reported feeling sad or depressed most days</p> <p>28.0% said that they are inclined to think they are a failure</p> <p>41.6% reported that “at times I think I am no good at all”</p>	<p>19.5% Student reported self-harm (such as cutting) increased</p> <p>21.4% reported considering suicide and 2.2% attempting suicide</p>	<p>Students reporting high levels of depressive symptoms showed much higher levels of substance use</p>
12TH GRADE	<p>43.7% of students reported feeling sad or depressed most days</p> <p>29.4% said that they are inclined to think they are a failure</p> <p>41.0% reported that “at times I think I am no good at all”</p>	<p>21.3% ↑ reported considering suicide</p> <p>12.2% ↑ attempting suicide</p>	<p>6.2% reported skipping a meal because of family finances</p>

31.0% ↑ students who reported they were so sad they ceased doing their usual activities increased. 2019: 25.2%
2017: 22.8%



OTHER DATA

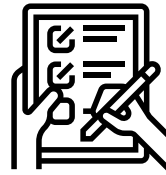


38.3%

of students reported sleeping less than 7 hours a night on school nights

10th Graders: 46.2%

12th Graders: 54.2%



55.5%

of all students reported engaging in school sponsored activities



65.3%

of students reported feeling tired or sleepy during the day every day or several times during the past two weeks

10th Graders: 75.0%

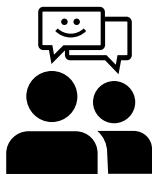
12th Graders: 78.4%



66.3%

of seniors reported having a job or employment

up from 61.6% in 2019; 34.5% reported volunteering



93.5%

of students in all grades reported that their parents knew where they were and who they were with

This increased in all grades from 2019



85.7%

of students reported that there are clear family rules about alcohol and drug use

6th Graders: 90.5%

12th Graders: 79.8%



12.3%

of all students said it would be easy or sort of easy to obtain a handgun

This figure has decreased each year since 2015 across all grades.